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Ingersoll Under the Microscope.



BY J. M. BUCKLEY, D.D.

INGERSOLL

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

COL. R. G. INGERSOLL'S
RECKLESS MISSTATEMENTS EXPOSED
AND HIS MENTAL AND MORAL
CHARACTERISTICS
ANALYZED

am BY
J. M. BUCKLEY, D.D.

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INGERSOLL UNDER THE MICROSCOPE.

A FEW days before Christmas, 1891, a daily paper published a contribution entitled "Colonel Ingersoll Preaches a Christmas Sermon." The "sermon" was a tissue of falsehoods so far as it related to Christianity. Finding the paper circulating in Christian families, in the ordinary course of its duty—one branch of which is to defend Christianity from sappers and miners within and traducers without—*The Christian Advocate*, of New York, contrasted those falsehoods with passages of Scripture which contain the principles of Christianity and its invitations and promises to all men, and conclusively proved the author of the Christmas sermon to be a libeler of the God of love.

These were its statements, the most mon-

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strous falsehoods the human mind could conceive:

Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief.

Contrast this libel with the Gospel:

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.” Luke ii, 14.

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matt. xi, 28.

“I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” Luke xv, 7.

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Luke xxiii, 42, 43.

It has filled the future with fear and flame, and made God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary, destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men.

Contrast the following precious truths with that base slander :

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xix, 14.

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." Acts x, 34, 35.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Pet. iii, 9.

Not satisfied with that, it has deprived God of the pardoning power.

How these words refute the traducer of the God of love!

"My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John ii, 1, 2.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John iii, 16.

“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” Rom. iii, 25.

The daily paper sent those blasphemies, with every artifice which the press can use to make the poison palatable, into homes where children were learning the Christmas carols, to declare to them that their fathers were teaching them a base deception, and their mothers were instilling into them folly and falsehood, and that those parents are themselves among the simpletons and feeble-minded of the world because they have believed that pure Christianity means “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.”

Every copy sent by mail went into the house as an enemy might introduce a South American scorpion coiled in a basket of fruit.

What that paper did would have been at any time grossly improper. To send out such matter from a man holding such an attitude toward Christianity at such a time and call it a Christmas sermon was an insult to every one of its readers who bow the knee at the name of Jesus.

THE ISSUE.

Colonel Ingersoll, stung by the exposure of his misrepresentations, came forward in a communication to the willing vehicle of his libels, in his own handwriting, to defend himself against the charge of uttering gigantic falsehoods, and said:

Let us take up these "gigantic falsehoods" in their order and see whether they are in accord with the New Testament or not—whether they are supported by the creed of the Methodist Church.

I insist that Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. According to the orthodox creeds, Christianity came with the tidings that the human race was totally depraved, and that all men were in a lost condition—and that all who rejected or failed to believe the new religion would be tormented in eternal fire. These were not tidings of great joy.

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If the passengers on some great ship were told that the ship was to be wrecked—that a few would be saved, and that nearly all would go to the bottom—would they talk about “tidings of great joy?”

In this he shows that he knows nothing of the “Creed of the Methodist Church.” He has confounded it with the most extreme form of Calvinism.

Methodism as taught by John Wesley—all the Methodism which ever existed except a small section known as Calvinistic Methodists—was a protest against this. Methodism teaches that, although all are born with evil moral tendencies, the Spirit of God enters every human heart, making it possible for every man to be saved, and continually drawing him thereto. This doughty champion is ignorant of this.

The illustration of the ship is very good; but not for his use. Christianity found the world sunk in heathenish vice and superstition and Jewish formality, with here and there noble exceptions. It was, indeed, like a great ship drifting before winds and waves, apparently destined to go to the bottom. Christianity came, like another great ship,

well-manned and officered, with reliable chart and compass. It drew alongside the drifting doomed ship, and offered to take all the passengers on board, and guarantee them a safe voyage to a most desirable port. Only those who persistently refused to leave the foundering ship were to be left behind. Is not such a message "tidings of great joy?"

To show that Christ did not come to bring peace, he says: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword." In this and what follows Christ simply forewarns his disciples that in some instances their parents, in others their children, would resist their following him, and they must not expect that they could be his disciples without enduring much hardship for him.

Now, as to the message of eternal grief?—

He quotes this and several texts of similar meaning:

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous [meaning the Methodists] into life eternal,"

and then says:

Knowing, as we do, that but few people have

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been believers, that during the last eighteen hundred years not one in a hundred has died in the faith, and that consequently nearly all the dead are in hell, it can truthfully be said that Christianity came with a message of eternal grief.

When he puts into the text "[meaning the Methodists]" he gives an illustration of his ordinary style. The Methodists have taught from the beginning that all believers in Christ, whatever their name, receive the benefits of salvation. It was their glory that they required no man to hold any particular creed or form of opinions provided he believed in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ, repented of his sins, and tried to live a righteous life. The subscription required of its members is the most general character sufficient to prevent false teachers from insinuating themselves. It would have been equally slanderous had he inserted Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Lutherans. For they do not, and never did, believe that the saved are confined to their own members. The Roman Catholics expressly disavow that.

That "nearly all the dead are in hell," and that God is the keeper of an eternal penitentiary destined to be the home of "nearly all the sons of men," is an untruth of such monstrous proportions that it spans the universe.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." By these words Jesus declared the doors to everlasting life open to more than half the population of the globe in all ages and lands, from the first birth to the end of time.

"For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law." "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves."

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Here, then, all who die before being mature enough to reject Christ intelligently,

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deliberately, and willfully—which means much more even than many Christians seem to think—are saved. All who through arrested mental development remain infants are saved. Those who never heard of Christ, but live according to the light they have, in every land, are accepted by God.

Christianity teaches that whether the delay in Christ's coming be long or not, it is solely for the purpose of increasing the number of the finally saved. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

In degrading the New Testament he endeavors to show that it is worse than the Old:

In the Old Testament there is nothing about punishment in some other world, nothing about the flames and torments of hell. . . . The Old Testament gave the future to sleep and oblivion. But in the New Testament we are told that the punishment in another world is everlasting.

He has caught up without investigation

the vagary that the Old Testament has nothing to say about a future life. It does say but little, since Jehovah, by special miracles, subdued his enemies, and chastised his people for sin or rewarded them for obedience. But that the future life had a place in the thoughts of the righteous is made clear by the translation of Enoch for special piety, and the ascension of Elijah for special services.

The psalmist prayed that he might be delivered from "men of the world which have their portion in this life," and said in contrast: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness;" and affirmed that God would guide him with his counsel, and afterward receive him to glory. In Daniel it is expressly declared that "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

From these passages and others, as well as from their traditions, by far the most numerous sect of the Jews held a future

state for both the righteous and the wicked, though a few Christian commentators deny it to the wicked both on New and Old Testament grounds.

Does not this flippant traducer of the living and the dead know that John Wesley shook off the misconception that included the heathen under a general and indiscriminate law of condemnation, and in his sermon on "Living Without God" said: "Nor do I conceive that any man living has a right to sentence all the heathen and Mohammedan world to damnation. It is better far to leave them to him that made them, and who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh, who is the God of the heathens as well as the Christians, and who hateth nothing that he has made!" Does he suppose the American people generally are so ignorant of the Bible as not to know that it expressly declares: "For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye?" Does he not know the Bible teaches that the number of the finally saved will be as the stars of heaven, and as the

sands upon the sea-shore innumerable, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation?" Christianity teaches that Christ died for the whole world; that the Holy Spirit is given to every man; that none who have no light will be condemned; and that the test at the judgment-seat of Christ will be applicable to any degree sufficient for responsibility. Even those who reverently doubt—if they be true to the light which is in them—will be of the multitude that no man can number.

This doctrine, the future everlasting punishment of the incorrigibly wicked, he says, "is the infamy of infamies," because men are finite beings and time a finite period. Yet he knows that the gravity of an offense is not determined by the time it takes. Murder, one of the greatest of crimes, can be committed in a short time. One can betray his country in five minutes; acts of wickedness which can change the character beyond any means of restoration known to man have been conceived and executed in a few minutes. Is it "the infamy of infamies" where a just government promises

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all law-abiding people protection at every cost, and threatens incorrigible outlaws with destruction? Ingersoll undertakes to say what it would be right for an infinitely wise God to do. His principles are those from which anarchism logically follows.

Though he says in this reply that he [Ingersoll] has "good mental manners," he also affirms that whoever believes in the justice of expelling from heaven and punishing those who persistently sin against all God's efforts and pleadings, "is suffering from at least two diseases—petrification of the heart and putrefaction of the brain."

This weak alliteration disappears in the presence of names, "the latchet of whose shoes he is not worthy to stoop down and unloose." Who believed it? Milton, poet, patriot, scholar; Pascal, of mind and heart the peer of any man who ever lived; Elizabeth Fry, type of woman at her best in brain and heart; John Howard, the "friend of the prisoners;" Wesley, who gave his days to saving men's bodies from intemperance, vice, and poverty, their minds

from ignorance, their hearts from impurity and sin, to whose all-inclusive philanthropy nothing was trivial that would make men happier; Wilberforce, who gave himself to humanity, and broke the chains from slaves without distinction of color; Michael Faraday, the father of modern experimental chemistry; Jonathan Edwards, with brain as great as ever America produced, yet ready to walk five miles at midnight, through the snow, to nurse the sick child of a poor man; Father Matthew, who consumed himself in his zeal to deliver his countrymen from poverty and drunkenness; Muhlenberg, who spent his days in doing good of every sort, and gave New York St. Luke's Hospital; Livingstone, who essayed to lift Africa into light, and died upon his knees after a life of heroism unsurpassed, praying to the Jehovah of the Old Testament in the name of Christ of the New Testament; and millions of men and women who have given their lives to the welfare of humanity—these all believed that deliberate, willful, incorrigible rejecters of God in Christ would be banished

from his presence and that of his redeemed people.

These great names are not brought forward to prove the doctrine true which they held, but to show that men of the purest heart, strongest mind, and noblest life held it, and were stirred by it to heroic and self-sacrificing efforts to save men.

Over one island in the sea of eternity Christianity leaves a dark shadow ; but not one innocent or penitent soul is there ; not one is there who did not choose death rather than life ; not one whom God could save without repudiating the essential distinction between sin and righteousness.

THE MAN.

What are the characteristics of the man who says such things in such a spirit ? Colonel Ingersoll is brilliant both as an orator and rhetorician. Of philosophy he has none ; of logic considerable of the kind most useful before an ordinary jury and least serviceable before a judge of the highest rank. In his professional career his logic has been used according to the necessities of the case

which he had in hand, and he has been successful. Where logic fails, wit and pathos reenforce a feeble argument, so that he is a dangerous antagonist before a jury, unless his opponent have resources similar to his own. In his treatment of religious and moral questions his logic has simply been the servant of his passions and prejudices. To the realm of philanthropy he has seldom, so far as we are able to ascertain, applied himself. His popular lectures on religious subjects have been marked by a coarseness and blasphemy to which Thomas Paine never descended, and they have been particularly adapted to "split the ears of the groundlings."

Two or three Catholic priests of great ability have replied to him in kind (excepting the blasphemy), and literally pulverized every thing of the nature of an argument he advanced.

The *North American Review* introduced him to another class of readers. It began by inviting Colonel Ingersoll to write an article, and Judge Jeremiah Black, the great Pennsylvania lawyer of the old school, to reply.

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Then came Drs. Lyman Abbott, Henry M. Field, Professor Fisher, of Yale, and Mr. Gladstone. Professor Fisher moved on an intellectual plane so much higher than Colonel Ingersoll that it is doubtful if the latter could really comprehend, though he might apprehend verbally, what Professor Fisher said.

Dr. Field wrote in his usual elegant style and in a benignant, almost paternal spirit, apparently entirely misunderstanding the nature of the man with whom he was contending. He might as well have stood in the Haymarket in Chicago and requested the anarchists, when they were exploding their bomb, not to make a noise, as it was disturbing the nerves of the public.

Mr. Gladstone paid almost no attention to Colonel Ingersoll, but simply furnished an article in his usual magnificent style, fulfilling his contract with the proprietor of the *Review*. Dr. Abbott made the closest approach to a reply, writing with unusual felicity; but, not himself being prepared to maintain the ordinary Christian ground on most of the fundamental points of objection

alleged by Colonel Ingersoll, there was no issue joined. Nor could any representative of Christianity have done better.

None of these able men could cope with him, for the same reason that Von Moltke, though the greatest general of modern times, would have been, in personal encounter, as an infant in the hands of John L. Sullivan. No one could contend with Colonel Ingersoll who has any sense of reverence or any reputation for genuine sensibility to lose. Before the Nineteenth Century Club of New York he spoke, and was followed by the Hon. Frederic R. Coudert, who referred to his mother's religion, and also spoke of the ease with which destruction can be wrought. Having said: "The babe began by destroying his bib" he passed on to the magnificent building in which they stood, and said that it took months, and possibly years, to build it, to adorn it, to beautify it, and exclaimed, "I will find a dozen men who, with a few pounds of dynamite, will reduce it and all of us to instant destruction."

Colonel Ingersoll replied:

No doubt Mr. Coudert has the religion of his

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mother, and judging from the argument he made his mother knew at least as much about these questions as her son. . . . One word more. The gentleman says that children are destructive—that the first thing they do is to destroy their bibs. The gentleman, I should think from his talk, has preserved his!

These extracts are from the authorized pamphlet publication.

In all these discussions there has been ample opportunity to study the mental characteristics of Colonel Ingersoll. In all of them there has never been a syllable to show that he has comprehended one of the least of the spiritual truths of Christianity, or had a feeling of reverence for any thing larger or more exalted than himself; that he has any proper sense of the effect of his words; and he has practically declared that if his doubts of the existence of a God were removed he would care little or nothing for him.

You cannot injure an Infinite Being if there be one. I will tell you why. You cannot help him, and you cannot hurt him. If there be an Infinite Being he is conditionless—he does not want any thing—he has it. . . . So do not trouble yourself about the Infinite.

Among the long list of blasphemers he shows the least delicacy, the least sense of responsibility, the most hardihood, and the most recklessness; takes the least pains to be accurate; makes the most unguarded and untrue statements; is most the slave of his words, most the creature of his moods. In deceiving the ignorant and the unwary, and tickling the ears of haters of all restraint who wish to live without fear of being judged for their deeds, he is wonderfully skillful. But in sound argument on religious subjects he is the least difficult to meet of the infidels of modern times whose assaults have made them notorious. This is owing to his being ignorant of many things necessary to such a discussion and to the reckless inaccuracy of his assertions. In one of his recent diatribes he says:

As to the reclamation of inebriates. Much has been said, and for many years, on the subject of temperance—much has been uttered by priests and laymen—and yet there seems to be a subtle relation between rum and religion. Scotland is extremely orthodox, yet it is not extremely temperate. England is nothing if not religious, and London is, par excellence, the Christian city of the world, and yet it is the most intemperate.

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The Mohammedans—followers of a false prophet—do not drink.

He knows the history of the temperance movement; he knows that Christianity in this country has upheld it till most of the Churches require total abstinence and all denounce drunkenness. Probably he knows that those principles are spreading rapidly in Scotland and England. Perhaps he knows that Mohammedan communities contain many that drink and that many are addicted to hasheesh and other drugs more pernicious than alcohol. In this country, whatever Christians have done for temperance has been done not only without his aid, but against his influence. Yet Colonel Ingersoll, who had the audacity to write the foregoing, wrote also this:

INGERSOLL'S EULOGY OF WHISKY.

I send you some of the most wonderful whisky that ever drove the skeleton from the feast or painted landscapes in the brain of man. It is the mingled souls of wheat and corn. In it you will find the sunshine and the shadow that chased each other over the billowy fields; the breath of June, the carol of the lark, the dew of night, the wealth of summer and autumn's rich content, all golden with imprisoned light. Drink it, and you

will hear the voices of men and maidens singing the "Harvest Home," mingled with the laughter of children. Drink it, and you will feel within your blood the startled dawns, the dreamy, tawny dusks of many perfect days. For forty years this liquid joy has been within the happy staves of oak, longing to touch the lips of men.

St. Peter describes this style: "Great swelling words of vanity, alluring through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." We do not intimate that Colonel Ingersoll is a drunkard, but that he is in bondage to his own self-indulgent, reckless, arrogant spirit, and knows nothing of true liberty.

No other man who possesses such wealth of language would debauch it to such a service. Had he studied the Bible he hates and his favorite Shakespeare, he might have written truthfully:

THE DIREFUL WORK OF WHISKY.

I send you some of the most wonderful whisky that ever brought a skeleton into the closet or painted scenes of lust and

bloodshed in the brain of man. It is the ghosts of wheat and corn crazed by the loss of their natural bodies. In it you will find a transient sunshine chased by a shadow as cold as an arctic midnight in which the breath of June grows icy, and the carol of the lark gives place to the foreboding cry of the raven.

Drink it, and you shall have "woe," "sorrow," "babbling," and "wounds without cause;" "your eyes shall behold strange women," and "your heart shall utter perverse things." Drink it deep, and you shall hear the voices of demons shrieking, women wailing, and worse than orphaned children mourning the loss of a father who yet lives. Drink it deep and long, and serpents will hiss in your ears, coil themselves about your neck, and seize you with their fangs; for "at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." For forty years this liquid death has been within staves of oak, harmless there as purest water. I send it to you that you may "put an enemy in your mouth to steal away your brains." And yet I call myself your friend.

The New Testament describes the reverent doubter who longs for truth and certainty and for help in struggling upward, and tells the Christian to be ready ever to give a reason for the hope that is in him. *To* him it says:

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

And it gives him a prayer, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief." *Of* such it says:

Him that is weak in the faith receive ye. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

But of proud, arrogant haters of the Gospel Jesus said:

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

He does not call them dogs or swine, but teaches that, as these will destroy what does not suit their appetites and attack those who cast pearls before them, so it is in vain to

try to lead such men to Christ. For they will but contradict, caricature, blaspheme, and denounce those who would save them.

INFIDELS AND THEIR WORK.

At all times since Christ came there have been unbelievers, many of whom have been bold and aggressive.

In modern times many of them have become Spiritualists, reacting from the extreme of unbelief to that of credulity. The most recent instance is Madame Annie Besant, who three years ago was chief speaker for the infidels, and now adopts the humbug of Theosophy.

Many who before middle life had been pronounced and aggressive infidels have later on become reserved, and have sometimes expressed themselves doubtfully concerning the positions of which they had been so confident. And many have become earnest Christians. One of the most famous and audacious infidels of this century was Joseph Barker, far abler in argument and a greater master of forcible English and little less an orator and wit than In-

gersoll. After meeting and vanquishing many conspicuous and several really able advocates of Christianity, and temporarily greatly promoting infidelity, Mr. Barker, while in the maturity of his powers, renounced infidelity and devoted the remainder of his life to undoing the evil he had done. He did this without any pecuniary motive, as he was a man of property, and asked nothing of the Church.

We heard him in one of his debates when an infidel, and again twenty-five years afterward, when he had become a Christian. His death was remarkable for the clearest testimony to his faith in Christ. He called his eldest son, his lawyer, and one of his trustees to his bedside, and said :

I feel that I am approaching my end, and desire that you should receive my last words and be witness to them. I wish you to witness that I am in my right mind, and fully understand what I have just been doing; and dying, that I die in the firm and full belief of Jesus Christ, and in the faith and love of his religion as revealed in his life and works as described in the New Testament; that I have an abiding faith in and love of God, as God is revealed to us by his Son Jesus Christ; and I die trusting in God's infinite love

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and mercy, and in full faith of a future and better life.

I am sorry for my past errors; but during the last years of my life I have striven to undo the harm I did by doing all I was able to serve God by showing the beauty and wisdom of the religion of his Son Jesus Christ. I wish you to write down and witness this my last confession of faith, that there may be no doubt about it.

His death occurred at Omaha, Neb., and the facts are made public by his son, Joseph Barker, Jr., who gives the names of Mr. Gilbert, his father's lawyer, and Mr. Kellom, his trustee, as witnesses.

Not an argument has ever been made against Christianity by Colonel Ingersoll that was not more accurately and concisely made by Joseph Barker, and in logical defense of his position the latter was much the stronger. Many of his points have lost their weight on account of the adoption of more consistent views of the relative authority of different parts of the Bible, and of the diversity and latitude of its style, than were then allowed.

Many similar cases of the renunciation of infidelity by its ablest advocates might be given, often brought about by the sorrows

of life and by observation and experience of the awful consequences of a loss of faith in God, of the sense of moral responsibility, and of belief in a future life.

Meanwhile the Church has lived on. The infidels of each age predict its speedy death. They die. Christianity lives, and never showed greater energy or momentum than to-day. Its fundamental unity admits of organization; infidelity is always disintegrating, and liberal leagues, which such men as Ingersoll establish, are mere conclaves for shouting maledictions at the ever-increasing millions of the Christian Church.

It is the judgment of some that Ingersoll does a great deal of harm. While no doubt his influence is evil, it is, in our opinion, much less than it would be if he were not so careless and extravagant. Thousands of persons who are not roused to side for or against God, learning what orphans Ingersoll makes of the inhabitants of the world, how he throws doubts over immortality, impeaches the goodness of God if there be one, denies the freedom of man, and undermines

conscience, shrink from the abyss to which he leads. Some have tried to follow him and to make a scheme of life without God, or any real expectation of a future life; but the effect upon their *morale* has been so bad that in desperation they have turned for help to the Gospel in some of its forms.

The harm that he does is chiefly in strengthening weak minds and wills bent toward vice or sin, and furnishing to strong minds with bad hearts materials for impudent repartees. To any one in or out of the Church who is not far from the kingdom of God his spirit and sentiments would be so odious that they would as soon think of taking poison as to have any communication with him on the subject of religion.

FINIS.

Private character has no place in argument; but mental analysis is essential to interpret a man's relation to faith. In self-righteousness Colonel Ingersoll surpasses the Pharisees and equals any fanatic that ever lived. This can be shown by his own

testimony. In an address before the Nineteenth Century Club he says:

My good friend, General Woodford—and he is a good man telling the best he knows—says that I will be accountable at the bar up yonder. I am ready to settle that account now, and expect to be every moment of my life, and when that settlement comes, if it does come, I do not believe that a solitary being can rise and say that I ever injured him or her.

This is what he says of himself. Unless he repents and tries to undo the evil he has done, when he appears before that bar what he can truthfully say will be something like this:

“I was born where thousands of the best and most philanthropic people believed that there is a God, that he is the Father of all men, and that all men are brothers. I ridiculed their faith in God in an abusive, frivolous, irreverent manner. If I admitted that there might be a Supreme Being I took pains to say that he could neither ‘be helped nor hurt,’ and ‘that people need not trouble themselves about the Infinite.’ Most of these persons believed that men are placed in this world to prepare for a glorious des-

tiny, and rejoiced in the thought of an immortality of peace, love, and joy. They were often tempted, but, believing in God and in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in a punishment to shun and a life eternal to gain, they struggled on, and tried to teach their children the sentiments that had been so helpful to them. I caricatured and denounced their faith.

“I was ever ready to sow the seeds of unbelief, and on one occasion chose the Christmas season to ridicule the carols of faith, hope, and love by slandering the Gospel and declaring it a message of eternal grief.

“I despised and traduced the religion that contains the Sermon on the Mount, the parable of the good Samaritan, the parable of the prodigal son, the prayer of the publican, and the story of the penitent thief. I eulogized whisky, and my portrait and name were the companion and encouragement of drunkards.

“The suicide fortified himself by my teachings, saying that if there were any hereafter he would have a better chance than he had here, and if there were none he

would never know it. The more calculating criminals rejoiced in my teachings, and the publishers of obscene publications to be sent through the mails counted upon me as their defender.

"I did all this, and gave those from whom I took the bread of life only the cold stones of unbelief, to chill and sink them in despair, and the scorpions of my own venomous words against the Church of Christ."

Yet such is the state of this man's mind that he says: "I not believe that a solitary being can rise and say that I ever injured him or her!"

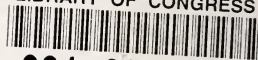
The wisdom of Jesus characterized such a mental and moral condition: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness?"

If such words and such a spirit as proceed from the mouth and pen of Colonel Ingersoll affected the intellect, only the experience of most persons of trial and sorrows and the example of true and consistent Christians, together with the drawings from above of the Holy Spirit, might be expected to counteract them in most cases. But they weaken

the restraints of conscience, strengthen passion and appetite, exclude from the soul all high spiritual ideals and lead to continual self-indulgence. Thus chains of evil habit are forged, and those who accept his views become in spirit like himself or sink in conduct according to their temperament and surroundings. Some of his devotees simply ignore God and religion, saying little upon the subject; others oppose and condemn it and plunge into vice; others are zealous to spread their barren and poisonous ideas, corrupting the faith of the young whenever they have opportunity.

The man who would choose Ingersoll rather than Jesus as his teacher is of like mind with those who cried "Release unto us Barabbas!" The youth who takes Ingersoll for the guide of his life prefers a stone to bread, a scorpion to a fish.

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